

## Be Prayerful

Andrew Klaven grew up in a Jewish home on Long Island, but became a hardened atheist by early adulthood. By midlife, his novels *True Crime* and *Don't Say A Word* became hit movies, propelling him to wealth and fame. Nevertheless, Andrew was empty inside. One night a simple prayer (“Thank you God”) led to a spiritual awakening. In his autobiography *The Great Good Thing*, Andrew details his prayer-filled journey to Christ and baptism. Prayer changes things!

### Five Principles for Effective Prayer:

#### 1. Pray With Your \_\_\_\_\_ (Supporters)

- a. *“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.” Acts 4:23-24.* When we are troubled, we need to find our friends, share our hearts, and seek God together in prayer. This is modeled in Daniel 2:17 and Acts 12:6 and taught by Jesus in Matthew 18:20.

#### 2. Pray For God’s \_\_\_\_\_ (Sovereignty)

- a. *“Sovereign Lord, you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.” Acts 4:24.* Although the Romans referred to Caesar as “sovereign”, only God has absolute power. When the Dolan family were faced with a medical prognosis of 2% survival for baby Henry, they created “Hope for Henry” t-shirts with Luke 1:37 on them, *“For nothing is impossible with God.”*
- b. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus relinquished his own will for His Father’s, praying, *“Not my will but thine be done.” Matthew 26:39.*

#### 3. Pray With \_\_\_\_\_ (Scripture)

- a. *“You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David, ‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.’ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met...to conspire against Jesus...They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.” Acts 4:25-28.*
- b. When we pray for people to come to faith in Christ, we know this is in accordance with God’s will. *“He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” II Peter 3:9.* *“God our Savior wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” I Timothy 2:4.* We need to follow Paul’s example in praying for lost people to come to salvation (Romans 10:1).
- c. In Genesis 19:16, God saves a reluctant Lot from the destruction of Sodom. This seems to be in response to Abraham’s pleading for God to extend mercy to the city’s inhabitants in Genesis 18:32. In spite of being rescued by angels, Lot’s wife turned back. *“Remember Lot’s wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.” Luke 17:32-33.*

**4. Pray For Your \_\_\_\_\_(Speech)**

- a. *“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.” Acts 4:29.* Instead of praying for deliverance, they pray for obedience. As we pray for the right words to share (Psalm 19:14), the Lord will guide us (Luke 12:11-12).
- b. A recent poll shows that only 22% of unchurched Americans agree with the statement, “My Christian friends talk about faith too much.” Most are open to hearing the Gospel. 30% of the unchurched even say that they admire the faith of their Christian friends.

**5. Pray For \_\_\_\_\_(Signs)**

- a. *“Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 4:30.* We can prayerfully ask God for a sign today as to when and where we should share our faith. On other occasions, God may give evidence of His presence and power through the means of a sign.

**Twenty years before praying his “Thank you God” prayer, Andrew Klavan began seeking God. He started attending churches, eventually meeting Doug Ousley, an Episcopal priest, who shared the Gospel with him. Andrew was also deeply impacted by Doug’s unconditional love for his wife, Mary, who had been stricken with multiple sclerosis. Our prayers and our lives go hand in hand. We must be faithful in both. Are you committed to doing both as you share your faith in Christ?**

# Discussion Questions

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1. Have you ever heard of Andrew Klavan? What did you learn about his journey to faith in Christ? Why is it often much harder for a Jew to come to faith in Christ? What role did prayer play in Andrew Klavan's conversion? Have you ever had an experience like Andrew's the morning after he began praying? Have you had a time in your life when it seemed as if you were suddenly filled with joy?
2. Read Acts 4:23-31. Why is it so important, after you've experienced a serious trial, to 1) meet with friends, 2) share your heart with them, and 3) pray together with them? What is taught in Daniel 2:17 and Acts 12:6 about the importance of friends praying together? What did Jesus teach in Matthew 18:20?
3. Read verse 24. What does it mean to say that God is sovereign? Why is it important for us to pray for God's sovereignty over whatever problem we are facing? Have you ever had to relinquish your own will and accept the Father's will, as Jesus did in Matthew 26:39? What have you learned about prayer by watching the progress with Henry Dolan? What verse is written on the "Hope for Henry" t-shirts? Why do you think this verse was chosen?
4. Read verses 25-28. Why is it important to quote Scripture when we pray? What can we learn from the Scripture that is quoted in verses 25-26? What does II Peter 3:9 and I Timothy 2:4 teach us about God's will with respect to reaching lost people with the Gospel? Why is it important to pray these verses as you pray for the lost? What do we learn from Paul's example in Romans 10:1? What do we learn about Abraham's prayer in Genesis 18:32 and God's answer in Genesis 19:6? What did Jesus teach in Luke 17:32-33?
5. Read verse 29. Why do you think Peter, John, and their friends prayed for obedience instead of praying for deliverance? Why is it important to pray verses like Psalm 19:14? What do we learn about talking in front of other people from the teaching of Luke 12:11-12? Have you ever sensed God giving you the exact words to share with someone? What did you say and how did you feel knowing God was using you? Why is it important to know that only 22% of Americans think their Christian friends talk too much about their faith? Why is it important to know that 30% of the unchurched admire the faith of their Christian friends? What do we learn from the prayer in verse 30? What signs have you seen that have authenticated God's presence and guidance? Why is it important to not only pray for the lost but to live out our faith daily? Are you committed to doing both?